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POLICE GIVEN DATA ON BOAST BY ROWE

Reports May Back F.B.I. Informer in Klan on Killing in South

By HOWELL RAINES
Special to The New York Times

BIRMINGHAM, Ala., July 13 — Police sources here said today that they had information that might support Gary Thomas Rowe Jr.'s contention that he killed a black man during racial unrest in Birmingham in 1963, while Mr. Rowe was on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's payroll as an informer within the Ku Klux Klan.

The sources said a former Klansman and another man described as a Klan sympathizer told the police, in separate accounts, that Mr. Rowe had boasted to them that "I shot some niggers" during rioting that followed a double bombing in a black neighborhood.

A Birmingham police officer has also told city investigators that he saw Mr. Rowe with a pistol stuck in his belt near a police barricade like the one described by Mr. Rowe in his account of the killing.

Missing Report Is Sought

The investigators are now combing police files here for a missing report that they believe contains information about at least three unsolved shootings during the 1963 disturbances.

Meanwhile, another document has come to light that may add to the growing controversy over Mr. Rowe's involvement in racial violence while he was getting monthly payments from the F.B.I. In

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a statement to a Senate investigator in 1975, Mr. Rowe accused John Doar, former Assistant Attorney General for civil rights, of forcing him to change his account of the killing of Viola G. Liuzzo in 1965.

In the interview, Mr. Rowe said that Federal investigators ignored his report that a black man was also killed in Mrs. Liuzzo's car when Mr. Rowe and three Birmingham Klansmen chased down the Detroit woman's automobile on the night after she took part in a civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery. Mr. Rowe further alleged that Mr. Doar ordered him to keep silent when Mr. Rowe told Government prosecutors that he could not positively identify a black man called as a key Government witness as having been in the car with Mrs. Liuzzo at the time of the shooting.

Mr. Doar, contacted at his law office in New York, refused to discuss Mr. Rowe's allegations, saying that a Justice Department inquiry into Mr. Rowe's activities was the proper forum for such questions.

Frederick A. O. Schwarz Jr., who at the time was chief counsel to the Senate committee conducting the investigation, said today that he could not recall having been told about the alleged dispute between Mr. Rowe and Mr. Doar and added that he was quite certain the committee had never investigated the allegations.

The Liuzzo case brought Mr. Rowe national attention as the F.B.I.'s chief informer against the Klan in Alabama. He was later relocated and given a new identity by the bureau, and lives in an undisclosed location.

Mr. Rowe also told Senate investigators that the Justice Department, under its witness protection program, got him a job with a United States Marshal and allowed him to attend the Department of Justice Training Academy with 90 other Federal officers. Mr. Rowe charged that, because of his dispute with Mr. Doar, he was subsequently forced to resign the job, and that Marshal who employed him filed "false affidavits" in order to get Mr. Rowe an extra month's pay on which to find a job outside the Government.

Questioned in Church Bombing

When the authorities in Alabama reopened their investigations into the unsolved racial killings in the early 1960's, they contacted Mr. Rowe for information on the 1963 bombing that killed four black children at Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. But Mr. Rowe himself became a suspect in that case after two polygraph, or lie-detector, tests showed that he was giving "deceptive" answers when he denied having been with the group that planted the bomb.

Since that time there have been disclosures that indicate that Mr. Rowe may have participated in and helped to plan the Klan violence he was hired to observe.

A former leader of the Ku Klux Klan in Birmingham said today that Mr. Rowe helped direct the attacks on the Freedom Riders at a Birmingham bus station on May 15, 1961.

Mr. Rowe himself said, in an interview with Alabama investigators last fall, that he participated in the firebombing of the home of A. G. Gaston, a black millionaire, according to investigative documents.

In the same series of interviews, Mr.

Rowe was quoted as saying he killed a black man during a riot here and was told by the F.B.I. agent to whom he regularly reported to keep quiet about the shooting. The agent named by Mr. Rowe has denied the report as "an absolute falsehood."

According to the Senate document that came to light today, Mr. Rowe said he was assured by F.B.I. agents here that his participation in violence had the personal endorsement of "The Man" — the late J. Edgar Hoover, then Director of the bureau.

'War' on the Klan

Mr. Rowe stated that "the quote to me was 'The Man has declared war on the Ku Klux Klan and that you are man enough to do, do it.' " Mr. Rowe stated that the "agent quivered, literally," in delivering this message and said "we don't have to worry about covering you any more."

The Birmingham Police Department's information about a possible shooting by Mr. Rowe was obtained, sources said, before disclosure by The New York Times that Mr. Rowe had told investigators that such a shooting took place.

The police inquiry here now is focusing on Mr. Rowe's activities after bombings on the nights of May 11 and Sept. 4, 1963. Rioting of the sort described by Mr. Rowe took place on both nights. By the accounts of Mr. Rowe and others, according to investigative documents, Mr. Rowe was in the riot area on both occasions.

Account of Shooting

The documents show that Mr. Rowe told a state investigator that he came upon blacks attacking a taxicab on Eighth Avenue here and beating a woman passenger. When the rioters turned on him, Mr. Rowe is quoted as saying, he shot a black man through the chest. Then, Mr. Rowe is reported to have said, he went to a barricade and reported the shooting to a policeman and later, by telephone, to his F.B.I. "control" agent.

According to an investigative source, a Birmingham policeman has told detectives here that during the riot on May 11, "he came down Eighth Avenue and stopped and got out of his car and Rowe was standing there in the middle of the road in civilian clothes with a gun stuck in his belt."

Later that same night, according to an investigative document, a fellow Klansman saw Mr. Rowe and talked to him at a telephone booth at 3 A.M. "At that time, Rowe stated to him that he had been uptown shooting Negroes," the document stated.

In a separate interview, the companion of the Klansman who gave that report supported the account without prompting, investigative sources here said. Mr. Rowe was quoted as telling the two men: "There's been a bombing. The niggers are rioting. I shot some niggers."

However, the assault on the taxicab described by Mr. Rowe more closely matches an incident that took place on Sept. 4, after the bombings of the A. G. Gaston Motel and the home of the Rev. A. D. King, brother of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

On that night, Mr. Rowe has told state investigators, he was riding with Birmingham policemen in the riot area when they came upon a taxicab whose driver and a woman passenger were under assault by rioters.

Investigators here are now looking into the possibility that a former policeman named by Mr. Rowe as a possible companion, and known to have been a close friend of the informer, may be able to give a firsthand account of Mr. Rowe's actions at that time.

Official police reports show that 22 blacks were shot and one killed on the night of Sept. 4. However, an investigator here said that there is "a good possibility" that as many as 50 blacks were shot and several killed in incidents that were not officially recorded by the police.

"There were bodies laying on the ground, shot dead, no witnesses," said an investigative source. "Back then, in that time, remember, they just passed over it."

Investigators here are trying now to locate a police report from that time that is recalled to have reported three such homicides.

Informer Is Subject of TV Movie

By ALJEAN HARMETZ
Special to The New York Times

LOS ANGELES, July 13 — Gary Thomas Rowe Jr., the Federal Bureau of Investigation informer who told the authorities in Alabama that he killed a black man while on the bureau's payroll, is the hero of a nearly completed two-hour movie made for television.

The movie, "The Freedom Riders," is based on Mr. Rowe's paperback book, "My Undercover Years with the Ku Klux Klan." The film was made by Columbia Television for broadcast on NBC and stars Don Meredith, the former Dallas Cowboys quarterback, as Mr. Rowe. Most of the film was photographed in May, and Columbia expects to deliver it to the network in two to three weeks.

The film centers on the killing in 1965 of Viola Liuzzo, a Freedom Rider from Detroit who went to Selma, Ala., to march with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Mr. Rowe was in the car from Mrs. Liuzzo was shot to death.

Executives to Meet Monday

Gene Walsh, NBC's vice president for public information, said that Deanne Barkley, the network's vice president for mini-series, will meet on Monday with Larry White, president of Columbia Television, to decide what will be done about the program.

Mr. White was unavailable for comment. However, a Columbia spokesman said that the movie's fate is up to the network. "We have been paid for the movie. We no longer have any control over it," the spokesman said.

A Columbia executive who has seen a rough version of the movie said, "While Gary Rowe is not exactly a hero, he is certainly more hero than villain. He is presented as a poor guy without any education who had a chance to do what he always wanted to do — work for a law enforcement agency."

The rights to Mr. Rowe's book were acquired for Columbia by a vice president who is no longer with the company. The film originally was to have gone into production last January, but was delayed four months because Barry Shear, the director, underwent surgery.

"The Freedom Riders" was written by Lane Slate and Roger O. Hirson. The producer is George Lehr. The cast includes James Wainwright, Albert Salmi, Clifton James and Lance LeGault as Klan members. Ed Lauter plays the F.B.I. agent to whom Mr. Rowe reports, and Slim Pickens appears as a Southern sheriff.